
ONE SNOWY NIGHT

By Genevieve Ulmar

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Hayden Lee knew that the face upon which his hand rested was that of a woman, for it was soft and delicately profiled. He knew that she must be young, for, though she was utterly unconscious, her slight breathing was quick and even. There he was, in total darkness, and had nearly stumbled over the recumbent form at the bottom of the stairs.

She had fainted or fallen and had not been long in her present position, for the snow and damp still clung to her garments.

"Heaven help her! A wild, wintry night like this!" he murmured, "and she must be poor and wretched, indeed, to have wandered to this poor neighborhood and driven to seek shelter in this forlorn old rookery!"

For such his habitation for the past six months was, in fact and verity. The remaining wing of a dilapidated old building, it had presented the welcome feature of the merest nominal rent in the world to his sister Prue and himself. He had lost his position as draughtsman at a critical time. Illness had ensued, then spasmodic piece work done at home. They had brightened up the smoke-stained rooms as best they might and had secured some second-hand furniture at a nominal price. As for the rest, Prue's diligence had brought what comfort the poor outfit could yield.

Lee lifted the limp form in his arms and called up the dark stairway:

"Prue—a lamp, quick!"

A door opened, light flooded the scene and his sister stared in a startled way down the stairs.

"What has happened?" she voiced flutteringly. "A woman?"

"Yes, I found her out here. Fainted or overcome with the cold. She needs instant attention."

His tones were vibrant, for the

flickering lamplight had revealed the fairest face he had ever seen. He was a lover of beauty and the lovely features presented to his vision stirred all of sympathy and interest in his readily impressed nature.

He bore his burden up the stairs and into the little sitting room and laid it on the couch. His sister stood holding the lamp aloft and peering, fascinated, with parted lips and marveling eyes. The stranger could not have been more than 20 years of age.



Tore Off the Rings.

Her garments were bedraggled, but were of the richest material. On one hand was a brilliant diamond circlet and a wedding ring. Then she was a wife? A widow? Lee was ashamed at the disappointment the discovery had caused him.

Prue roused to her normal, practical bustling self. She had their involuntary guest removed to her own room. Then Prue began expert ministrations. After the lapse of an hour